

SOCIAL News-Letter ACTION

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CONFERENCES ON BERLIN BLOCKADE

Conversations between representatives of the three Western powers and Mr. Molotov and Mr. Stalin concerning the problem of Germany have wisely been carried on in confidence. Newspapers and radios have thus not been able to confuse issues and accentuate hatreds by over-playing disagreements, but at the same time the public has been left uninformed as to the progress of the talks. So far the Russians have not even told their people that the conferences are going on, perhaps a good omen that the Soviet is really seeking agreement rather than using the talks to make propaganda for home consumption as has often been the case before.

Many religious bodies in the United States have joined with other forces in urging the Administration to re-enter negotiations with Moscow, especially in view of the numerous overtures by the Soviet inviting President Truman to do so. These suggestions have been rebuffed by the President, who has said that he would be glad to talk to Mr. Stalin in Washington. Now conversations are going on in Moscow. One of the most persistent speculations concerning their substance is that the ground is being laid for a full dress peace conference touching all the issues of dispute regarding Germany, and perhaps Japan also, with whom we are still technically at war with the Soviet as our ally.

THE BERLIN BLOCKADE OPENED THE WAY TO MOSCOW, although the chiefs of state have not as yet been brought together. It is a safe guess that one of the chief objectives of the Russians in closing canals, railroads and highways into Berlin, which lies wholly in her zone although the Western powers hold zones within the city, was to force such a conference. For she could hardly have supposed that the other occupying powers would surrender control of Berlin without conference. And she was correct in her judgment that they would not resort to warlike measures, the only other alternative.

Unless the talks end in a complete deadlock, which would be serious indeed, one can safely conjecture that they will end in a two-fold agreement: that the blockade will be lifted or drastically modified with some adjustment of the currency conflict which was the immediate occasion for it, and that a conference covering the major issues of Germany as a whole will be arranged on terms satisfactory to the Soviet.

What are those terms? The more immediate issue of the Berlin blockade is not the essential matter, as is well known. This crisis is the crystallization of two intermediate issues, behind which lie the three most fundamental points of contention. These two intermediate issues are, first, the recent move of the Western powers to set up a German state from the three zones which they occupy. Russia opposes this because she hopes for a unified, strongly centralized Germany which she would expect to be dominated by communist influence. The other intermediate issue is that of monetary reform undertaken by the Western powers when they introduced a new currency into their zones. This Russia opposed for a number of reasons, chiefly because it devalued even more the currency in use in the Soviet zone (actually she has had to create a new currency herself) and because this move promised increased economic stabilization in the Western zones where continued chaos would serve Soviet policy better.

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 1)

REVIEW OF THE LABOR YEAR

JAMES A. CRAIN

For many Americans Labor Day signifies merely the end of the vacation season and the last opportunity to spend a long week end in the country. But to millions of workers it is the one day in the year when labor—and that means organized labor, AFL, CIO, the railroad brotherhoods, the United Mine Workers and other independent unions—turns from the workbench, doffs its working clothes, puts on its best bib and tucker and celebrates labor's achievements.

THE WANING SIGNIFICANCE OF LABOR DAY

That is, that is what labor used to do. Like everything else, the style of Labor Day observance has changed. Once organized labor staged huge parades with the various crafts marching behind their floats and banners, disbanding to hurry to picnic grounds to fill up on food and drink and to listen to speakers acclaim the dignity of labor. But those days have gone, apparently never to return. Labor's house is divided and cooperation even to the extent of a joint parade seems an impossibility. And since competitive celebrations are out of the question Labor Day is losing the significance that it once had. What this portends for organized labor is difficult now to predict, but it is not likely that anything good will come from neglect of the one occasion in the year when labor had an opportunity to call attention to its contribution to the national life. There is no evidence now that we shall cease to observe the day; it is simply losing its significance and its meaning.

EMPLOYMENT, WAGES AND LIVING COSTS

The total labor force now stands at 61,300,000, with the number of employed at 59,700,000. The Marshall Plan and increased military expenditures promise continued industrial activity and consequent high levels of employment. The average weekly wage (\$51.89) is 117% above the 1939 average of \$23.86, but the comparison loses its impressiveness in the light of 152% increase in food costs. Building costs are up 107.5%, the wholesale commodity index 112.5%, and the overall cost of living 71.5%. That means that the 1948 dollar will buy only 58.3% as much as the 1939 dollar bought. Federal statisticians predict another 5-10% increase in living costs between now and January 1, 1949. The refusal of Congress to take effective steps to halt rising living costs should be considered in relation to the above figures.

INDUSTRIAL TENSIONS AND STRIKES

The year has been marked by few strikes as compared with the first two postwar years. The Taft-Hartley Act is credited—or blamed, according to one's point of view—for this situation. Supporters of the law claim that it is working beneficially and point to fewer strikes as proof. Labor insists that the law is so contrived that labor strikes at its peril, that a strike can be broken by federal injunction and that no matter how serious the grievance a striking union stands the chance of losing not only all its gains but its rights as a bargaining agent. It seems likely that organized labor will center its efforts in the forthcoming election on defeating members of Congress who supported the Taft-Hartley Act. Most bitterly opposed are the provisions legalizing the use of injunctions in labor disputes, forbidding unions to engage in political activity, and requiring union officials to sign anti-communist affidavits. The courts have held unconstitutional the section forbidding unions to engage

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 2)

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BRITISH BRETHREN APPRECIATE GIFTS

A letter has been received from the 102nd Annual Conference of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, in session at Chester, England, August 2-5 inclusive, 1948, expressing sincere appreciation to American brethren for parcels of food and clothing sent to members of the churches in Britain from time to time since the end of the war. The letter was dated August 4, 1948 and was signed by John R. Francis, president of the conference and pastor of the Moseley Road Church, Birmingham. The letter was also signed by William F. Arton and Kenneth Linnett, corresponding secretaries of the conference. The letter was addressed to James A. Crain, executive secretary of the department of social welfare of The United Christian Missionary Society, who supervises the sending of material relief abroad. The letter follows:

"Dear Brother Crain:

"The conference desires to express its very sincere appreciation of the generosity of our American brethren in continuing to send, from time to time, parcels of food and clothing to brethren in this country.

"These gestures of fellowship and concern for our situation are felt as a very close bond of Christian brotherhood, and it is a great joy to those who receive the parcels to know that the churches and brethren in America have us so constantly in mind.

"We should be grateful if you could find means of making this message widely known and read so that all the churches and individuals who have sent parcels may know what their Christian love and generosity has meant to us. With sincere greetings and good wishes on behalf of the conference."

Persons desiring to send parcels for distribution to needy brethren in the British churches should address same to Mr. W. Lister, chairman Social Questions Committee, 90 Reginald Road, Chaddesden, Derby, England. Inquiries addressed to Mrs. Ruth Estes Milner, Department of Social Welfare, 222 South Downey Avenue, Indianapolis 7, Indiana, will receive prompt attention.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Three very significant books of recent publication concern the basic spiritual issues which give rise to our social distress, all focused upon the task of the preacher in this situation. All should be read and pondered by preachers especially and all are equally important for laymen.

The Plight of Freedom, by Paul Scherer (Harpers, \$2.50), is both an analysis of what preaching ought to be and do and an example of what good preaching is in these times.

Main Issues Confronting Christendom, by Harold A. Bosley (Harpers, \$2.50), is a series of lectures on the philosophical and theological concerns which underlie our social confusion, from a point of view which one might call a chastened but confident liberalism.

The Shaking of the Foundations, by Paul Tillich (Scribners, \$2.50), is a collection of sermons and meditations of one of the most influential thinkers of our times. These are mainly expository sermons of long biblical texts and demonstrate anew how relevant the Bible is to the tragic decisions of every day of crisis, including our own.

KEEPING UP WITH THE RELIEF PROBLEM

MRS. RUTH ESTES MILNER

Revision in the CWS Program. Changing trends in overseas relief needs have made it necessary for CWS to revise some parts of its program so that the church people of America can most helpfully continue their relief and reconstruction work abroad. More emphasis will be placed on the "self-help" program sponsored by CWS in other lands. This will mean the shipment of more raw materials such as bulk wheat, cotton and wool. Such gifts will take care of needs, furnish employment and give the peoples of Europe and Asia a chance to develop their own reconstruction. At the same time, clothing and bedding will continue to be shipped through CWS.

Service Gifts to Mission Fields. During recent weeks shipments of clothing, notions, shoes, etc., amounting to 2100 pounds have been sent to our mission stations in India, the Philippines, China, Jamaica, and the Sapucay Leper Colony in Paraguay. Personal shipments were made to Mrs. Esther Snipes and Miss Gertrude Shoemaker in Africa. Fifteen "Boxes for Babies" went to three of our home missions institutions, All Peoples Church and Community Center, Los Angeles, Hazel Green Academy, Hazel Green, Kentucky, and Mexican Christian Institute, San Antonio, Texas. Most of these gifts were contributed by the women's groups of our churches.

Contributions to World Relief. Churches of the brotherhood continue to send in shipments of clothing and food for overseas relief. An aggregate of 8,500 pounds has been received since April and has been channeled through Church World Service through the Brethren Service Center at Nappanee, Indiana. This center cooperates with CWS in handling relief supplies.

Note: Donors both to world relief and to our mission stations will keep in mind shipping costs by providing financial gifts at the rate of 15c per pound to cover such charges.

CROP Activities. About 180,000 Wisconsin dairy farmers contributed one day's production for relief of undernourished children. Exportable milk and dairy products are among the most needed items at present for the normal growth of many child war sufferers. Oklahoma recently promoted a "Will Rogers Memorial Train" of wheat. Some counties designated Sunday, July 18, as Famine Relief Sunday. Every bushel of wheat contributed will go for relief purposes through CROP. Railroads provided free transportation to the seaboard and local churches provided funds for ocean freight.

Service Project Materials. Two service project booklets, "Children's Service Projects for World Relief" and "Service Gift Manual for Adult and Youth Groups" are available free from the Department of Social Welfare, The United Christian Missionary Society, 222 South Downey Avenue, Indianapolis 7, Indiana.

WEDDING BELLS

Wedding bells rang on Sunday, August 1st, when Mrs. Ruth D. Estes, national director of church and community service in the department of social welfare of The United Christian Missionary Society became the bride of Judge Joseph Milner of Indianapolis. Prior to coming to the service of the United Society Mrs. Milner was for ten years director of religious education at Third Christian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, where Judge Milner has been for many years a trustee. She is a sister of the late Meade E. Dutt and was for some time a teacher at Livingston Academy, Livingston, Tennessee. She received her A.B. from Transylvania College and took graduate work in the College of the Bible. Judge Milner is a prominent member of the Indianapolis bar.

ON SOCIAL FRONTERS

PROTESTANTS UNITED CALL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. The recently formed organization known as Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State has called Glen Leroy Archer, former dean of the law school of Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas, to become executive secretary with headquarters at 924 Colorado Building, Washington, D.C. He will enter upon the duties of his new position on September first. Mr. Archer is trained in the fields of journalism, education, and law. Protestants United was formed some months ago to support the traditional American policy of separation of church and state against sectarian encroachment. Plans envision a budget of \$100,000 per year, with branch organizations in many of the states. Numerous legal and political moves to end appropriation of public funds for sectarian schools and the use of religious garb by teachers in public schools are fruits of this organization.

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GROUP FORMED TO DEFEND "THE NATION." When *The Nation*, a weekly magazine of liberal tendencies some months ago published a series of articles dealing with the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to democracy, censorship, fascism, and science, pressure was brought to bear upon public school authorities to ban the magazine from public school libraries. This campaign was successful in a number of cities, notably in New York City and a number of adjoining New Jersey communities where Catholic influence is strong. Recently a volunteer committee was formed under the sponsorship of the American Civil Liberties Union to protest this attempt to censor what students may read. The committee states that the action of the school authorities in the case of *The Nation* may well serve as a "break-through for groups determined to ban other publications" for a variety of reasons. "It has been publicly explained," says the committee, "that the ban was adopted because *The Nation* published articles deemed offensive to a substantial religious group. The committee makes no comment upon the merit of the . . . series, neither approving nor disapproving them. Its concern is with the basic issues posed by the failure to renew the subscription to the magazine. Thus the censorship involved here is arbitrary and most dangerous. The idea that school libraries must contain only reading matter to which no substantial groups object . . . might well become a precedent in our community."

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THE RISING TIDE OF PROTEST AGAINST 'COMICS.' The tide of public protest over the effect of so-called "comics" on children continues to rise. Under date of August 17 the *Indianapolis Star* published a story from New Albany, Indiana, of three boys, aged 6 to 8 years, who purchased a box of matches and obtained a length of rope which was used to tie up and torture another child 7 years of age. The victim was taken to a small wood back of his home and was compelled to undress. After tying his hands behind his back the rope was placed around his neck and over the limb of a tree. The child was drawn up until only his toes touched the ground. His tormentors then staged a sort of war-dance around him, striking matches and holding them against his body, laughing while he screamed with pain. When frightened by what they thought was an approaching person the tormentors ran away. The noose was not a slip knot and the boy freed himself, but was afraid to go home without his clothes and remained hiding until found by a searching party. The report said that in court the victim displayed great welts on his neck and wrists made by the rope. Floyd county authorities have requested a ban on the sale of the so-called comics. Mayor Al Feeney of Indianapolis some time ago launched a crusade against certain types of comics sold and the retail druggists of South Bend instituted a similar campaign. Since many of these books are sold through drug stores the matter has been taken up with the state association of pharmacists.

WARBURG CHALLENGES U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

JAMES A. CRAIN

In an address to the American Academy of Political and Social Science at Philadelphia on April 3, 1948, James P. Warburg, nationally known financier and student of international affairs, challenged the foreign policy of the United States and proposed a constructive alternative. Professing no sympathy with the Soviet government, Mr. Warburg believes that President Truman is too greatly preoccupied with "stopping Russia" and that if this policy is continued it will sooner or later lead to war. Conceding that we could win such a conflict if precipitated now, he points out that we should have first to destroy the civilization of Western Europe, into which Russian forces would move immediately, and thus do irreparable harm to our friends. We should still have the vast heartland of Russia to conquer. And when we had done that we should have to maintain order and provide relief on a scale never before contemplated.

An Alternative Policy. As an alternative policy Mr. Warburg proposes to abandon the Truman Doctrine of "containment of Russia" by subsidizing such governments and Greece and Turkey, which can be called democratic only because they are opposed to Russian communism. He would renounce President Truman's theory that Russia and Russia alone, is responsible for the present impasse. Such is not the case, he says. While the major blame may be placed upon "the masters of distortion and prevarication who sit in the Kremlin," we ourselves are not wholly without blame. Also France has contributed her share to the situation. We, as well as the Russians, have violated international agreements intended to stabilize the postwar world.

The present world crisis, asserts Mr. Warburg, is due to four major causes, three of which have nothing whatsoever to do with Russia. The first is the fact that we are in a technological revolution which has produced, in fact, one world in which there can be neither peace nor prosperity for any people unless there is peace and prosperity for all peoples. Second, we are in a socio-economic revolution brought about by two world wars. The whole Eastern Hemisphere is suffering from shortages; its machinery is worn out, its raw materials depleted, its people exhausted and its capital and its colonies gone. Third, an accelerated process of elimination has caused the world's military, political and economic power to be concentrated in two poles of superpower. This means that the old "balance of power" is out because there is no longer room for nations to maneuver. We have come to the time when men can no longer live under law *within* nations while nations live with each other in a state of jungle lawlessness. The fourth, and a very important factor, is "the cynical fishing in troubled waters" being done by the Soviet Union.

Mr. Warburg would retain the Marshall Plan, as a means of rebuilding Europe, not as a bulwark against Russia, but as a means of rebuilding the political and economic life of the European peoples. He would throw the weight of the United States behind the non-communist progressive movements throughout the world, irrespective of whether or not they conform to our prejudices and predilections. He would throw the full power of our government behind United Nations with an open declaration of intention to build it into a world government. He would "make hash of the Kremlin's fondest hopes" by strengthening our own economy and thus defeating Moscow's expectation of an economic crash. He would stop the armament race, not because he does not believe in military preparedness, but because he thinks that UMT is a futile gesture and that fighting cannot save Western civilization. "My reason tells me that preparedness for war is now an illusion." Our military establishment will "very shortly be spending something like \$20,000,000,000 a year" (Congress since has exceeded this figure).

LABOR YEAR.....Cont. from Page 1, Col. 2

in political activity. Opposition to signing the anti-communist oath stems not from any particular sympathy with Communism but on the principle that Congress has no right to legislate on what is good or bad politics.

Notwithstanding the Taft-Hartley Act, a number of serious strikes were narrowly averted. A threatened nationwide railroad strike was settled when the operating trainmen agreed to accept a retroactive raise of 15%, the same figure agreed to by the non-operating unions some time before. However, it is the general impression that the powerful operating brotherhoods agreed only in order to join with the non-operating groups in a further wage demand at a later date. The steel industry granted a wage increase to Phil Murray's Steel Workers Union and immediately passed the raise, plus a healthy profit, along to consumers. The same formula—pass along the increased cost plus a profit—was accepted by the coal operators in their dispute with John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers. This has been the general pattern in wage negotiations throughout the year. Employers have found it more profitable to grant labor's demands and add their own "take" than to fight through a series of strikes with the inevitable interruptions and dislocations such controversies involve.

THE SOUTHERN ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

"Operation Dixie," as the drive to organize the workers of the South is known, continues to make headway but slowly. Southern industrialists and businessmen seemingly have learned nothing from the industrial conflicts which have rent other parts of the nation. Nor do they seem to be any more friendly to economic democracy than to political democracy. They are no more willing to grant workers the right to collective bargaining than they are to permit Negroes and sharecroppers to go to the polls. They are still defending \$30 a week wage and relying on the power of subservient police and sheriffs to prevent union organizers from getting to their workers. So many union organizers have been beaten up, maimed and killed that some union leaders are privately expressing the opinion that violence must be met with violence. Tired of being on the receiving end, they are now threatening to retaliate. Union officials who are seeking to prevent violence are rapidly losing their influence. If the tragic pattern so often worked out in the North is to be repeated in the South, Southern industrialists and businessmen will have only themselves to blame.

WHO IS TO BLAME FOR INFLATION?

That the country is now well on the way into a dangerous inflation is not denied by the most optimistic believer in permanent prosperity. Industry, seeking to divert attention from unconscionably high profits—now double the prewar figure—blames labor. Labor, in turn points to industry and its profits as the villain. Farmers, now enjoying an income of 246% above the 1939 level, blame both labor and industry for the prices they have to pay for farm machinery and for products which they buy in the market. Industrial production is up 76.1% above the 1939 figure and labor claims that productivity per man-hour has outstripped wage increases, so that the worker is actually giving management more per dollar of wages than in 1939.

That wage increases cause higher living costs is a widely believed economic fallacy. The extent of labor's responsibility for inflationary costs of living can be determined by answering the simple question, "Do wage increases precede price increases or do they follow them?" A moment's consideration should convince any fairminded person that wage increases are seldom granted until rising costs of living make such action necessary. It is an almost invariable rule that wages are not raised until the cost of living reaches a point where it is either grant an increase in wages or face a strike. So invariable is this rule that workers have almost no chance of securing a wage increase unless they can prove that living costs exceed the paycheck.

In fact, industry has tacitly, though perhaps unintentionally, admitted that wage increases follow higher living costs instead of causing them by adopting a "cost of living bonus" system. As worked out in the recent GM-UAW contract, the system provides that when living costs rise above certain graduated figures wages will be increased to correspond, and likewise, when living costs go down, wages will be reduced in proportion.

This seemingly fair proposition has about it certain implications which labor leaders will do well to ponder. By linking wages to living costs it implies that a living is all that labor is entitled to receive from industry. It puts labor on a subsistence basis and denies to millions of workers the right to any sort of "profit motive" so dear to defenders of so-called "free enterprise." It puts workers under a "controlled economy," so often and so bitterly assailed by management. The controlling factor is the cost of living and this sets the pattern for all workers, organized and unorganized alike. If labor accepts the principle it will be compelled to accept also its implications. In the long run labor may find the "cost of living bonus" more hurtful than even the Taft-Hartley Act.

CONFERENCES.....Cont. from Page 1, Col. 1

It is important to note that France also strongly opposed both these two measures, although in the end had to submit to the superior strength of the United States regarding them. The reasons urged by France were tactical. She insisted that such moves would result in retaliatory measures on the part of Russia, and predicted the impasse which actually ensued in Berlin. She warned the United States and Britain that in such a crisis the Soviet would possess a superior strategic position. Furthermore, France wishes to keep Germany as weak as possible, fearing repetitions of aggression if she is ever permitted to regain any power.

THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS concerning Germany are three. These constitute Moscow's asking price for peace. They are quite specific and clear, and have been for two years, now that the territorial aspirations of Russia have been realized; the re-annexation of areas lost as a result of World War I and a cordon of friendly states along her western borders. The remaining three she has insisted on in every conference of foreign ministers since the war.

First, the Soviet demands a new German government, elected by the German people, strongly centralized, and evacuated by all the occupying powers. The Western powers oppose this for several reasons. They fear elections will result in communist representation from the Russian zone which will dominate the government, and they have no desire to evacuate such a Germany. France opposes any kind of a rebuilt Germany. And America fears that such a Germany would follow the European pattern towards a socialist economy thus undermining capitalist interests.

Second, the Soviet demands international control of the Ruhr with herself participating equally in the control. The Western powers have already worked out a plan for internationalizing the Ruhr, but they do not intend to allow Russian votes to complicate the management of it nor allow Russian influence to operate toward communist control of the workers in the region.

The third demand is ten billion dollars in reparations, objectively not an unreasonable demand, since German invasion of Russia cost the latter some 70 billion dollars in property damage not to speak of the millions of lives. But the United States opposes this on the ground that Germany cannot pay, to which the Russians reply that they will take an agreed upon percentage of the increase in German industrial production above the present level. Also official "guesses" are that Russia would scale this down to about 7 billion, much of which she has already taken in removal of industrial equipment from her own zone.